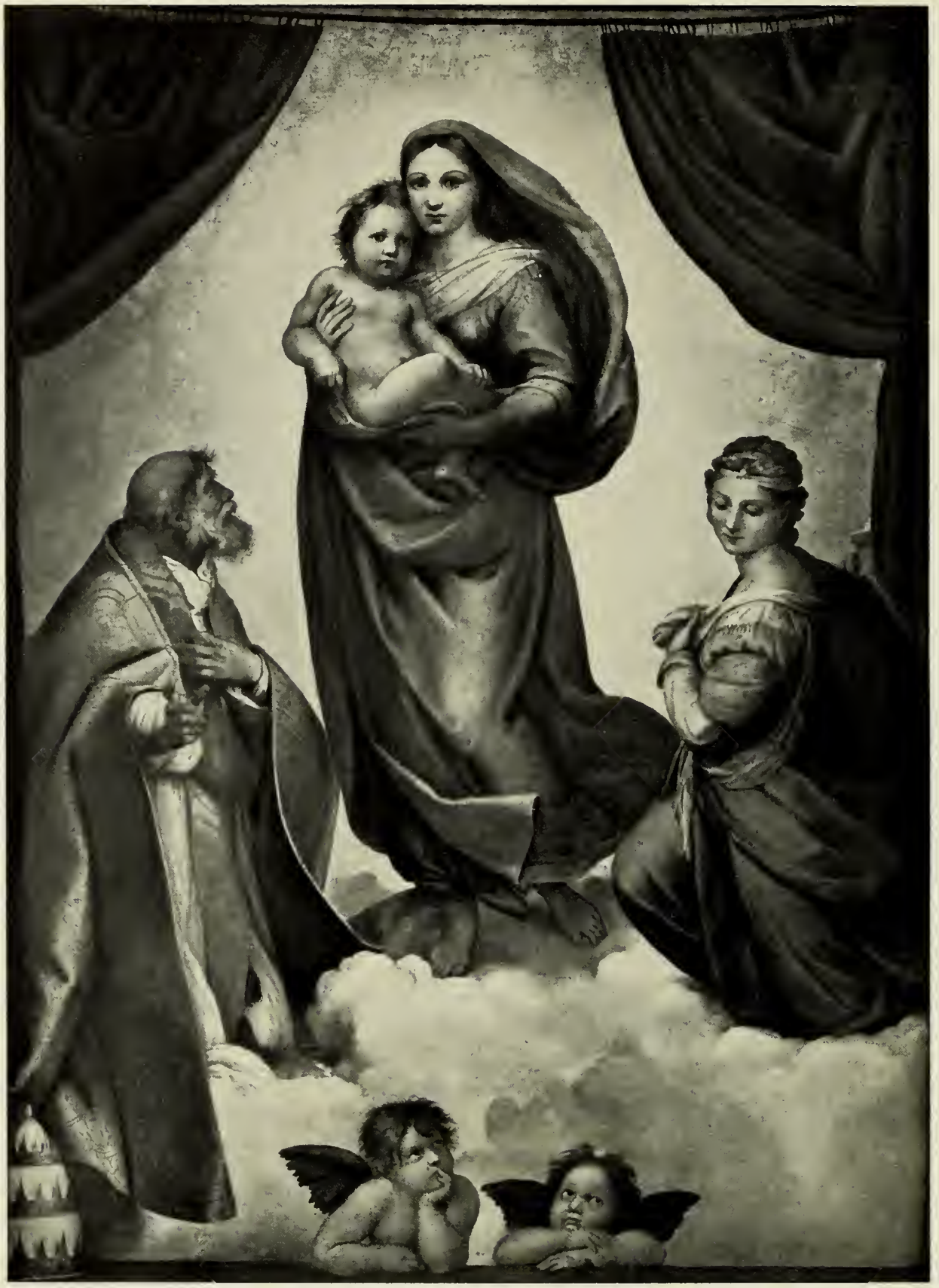
THE
MADONNA



THE SISTINE MADONNA

RAPHAEL

ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN

THE
MADONNA

By Philip L. Hale

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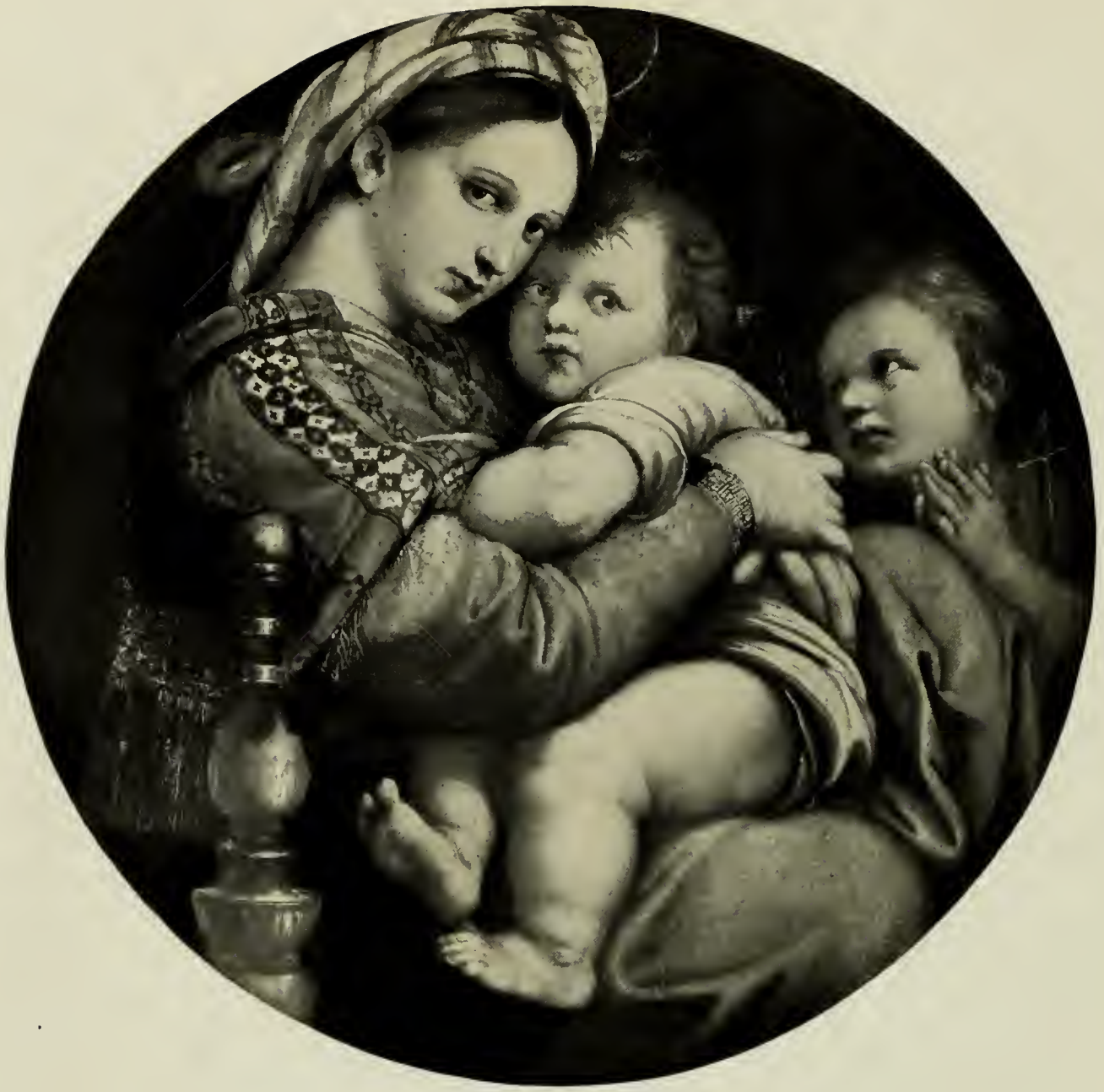
LIST OF PLATES



MADONNA OF THE CHAIR

RAPHAEL

PITTI PALACE, FLORENCE

THE MADONNA

IT is difficult to determine exactly the period when the cult of the Madonna began to be a feature of the Christian Church. St. Epiphanius mentions the worship of the Virgin so early as 403. At first it was regarded as a heresy and severely repressed; but gradually the cult — if not the worship — of Mary grew to be a recognized element in the early Christian Church.

It would appear the earliest representations of the Madonna are to be found on certain Christian sarcophagi, although she usually appears as one of a group, rather than enthroned as in later representations.

St. Augustine says that in his day no portrait of Mary existed. On the other hand, there is a legend, very possibly apocryphal, that the Empress Eudocia had a portrait of the Virgin which was supposed to be painted from life. This seems far from probable; yet if by any chance it had been true, it would have been interesting to see the counterfeit presentment of Mother Mary's features. There exists from another source a description of the Virgin which purports to come from original sources:

"She was of middle stature; her face oval, her eyes brilliant and of an olive tint; her eyebrows arched and black; her hair was of a pale brown; her complexion fair as wheat. She spoke little, but she spoke freely and affably. She was not troubled in her speech, but grave, courteous, tranquil. Her dress was without ornament, and in her deportment was nothing lax or feeble."

The so-called Nestorian Heresy had for the moment a restraining effect on the cult of the Madonna. But on its being crushed, the movement took on even greater strength. A heavier blow was the attitude of the Iconoclast under the lead of Leo III., the Isaurian. Doubtless the love of the Virgin had degenerated among the Eastern Christians to distinct worship. The movement might have had a certain usefulness, but under the violent Leo the repressive measures were so severe that they rather helped the movement in the long run by the indignation excited. Practically all the statues of Christian subjects throughout the East were destroyed during this senseless movement.

About 886 appear the first coins known to have representations of the Virgin. They are made in very flat relief, as the prejudice against "graven images" excluded everything but the flattest relief.

To many moderns—not by any means to all, but to many—the Madonna has come to be a symbol of

motherhood, and it is that which particularly charms them in the subject. But to men of the olden time she meant much more than that. She represented a mediator whom they might implore to intercede for them before an offended God. She was more than the loving Mother of one particular Child. She was the gracious lady, Our Lady of Many Sorrows, who out of the pity in her heart for weak humanity, out of the remembrance of the days when she too was but a woman, was willing to intercede for all who had sinned, who had failed to do right, yet who repented.

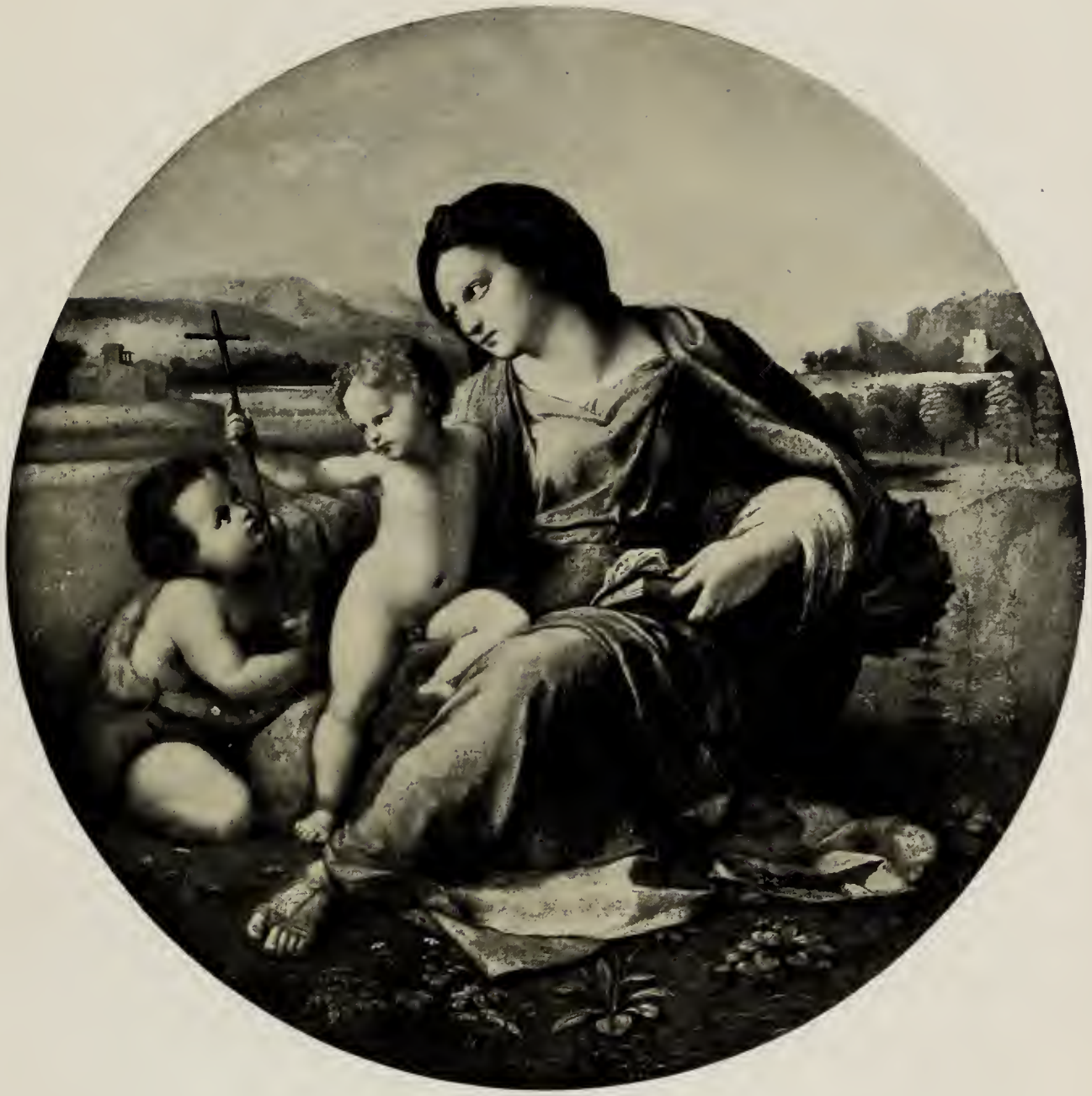
This should be insisted on, for the mother, in the abstract, represents divine selfishness. She is willing to sacrifice everything and everybody for her child. But Our Lady of Poverty, of the Seven Sorrows, and of all sorrow, represented divine unselfishness. As she appeared on the wall of a cathedral before simple peasants she represented one who had gone beyond all tears and laughter and would help them in their bitter need.

The picture of the Madonna took many forms, and yet they group themselves under comparatively few general heads. To begin with, there were devotional subjects ; and, first, there were pictures of the Virgin without the Child. The Church, after the fashion of the Bible, divided these subjects into the sacred number of seven. There were Virgo Gloriosa, Virgo Sponsa Dei,

Virgo Veneranda, Virgo Prædicanda, Virgo Clemens, and Virgo Sapientissima.

Again, there was the Mater Dolorosa, the Sorrowing Mother; and yet again, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, a subject particularly treated by Spanish artists influenced by the Society of Jesus. Again, there was the Virgin and Child enthroned, and it is of this motif that we generally think when we speak of a Madonna. Here again the subject was divided into many different heads. There were La Madre Pia enthroned, Mater Sapientiæ with the book, the Virgin and Child with attendant figures. And these figures varied. Now it was John the Baptist or St. Anna. Again, the Virgin was between St. Catharine or St. Barbara, or it might be St. Christopher stood near by, or St. Leonard.

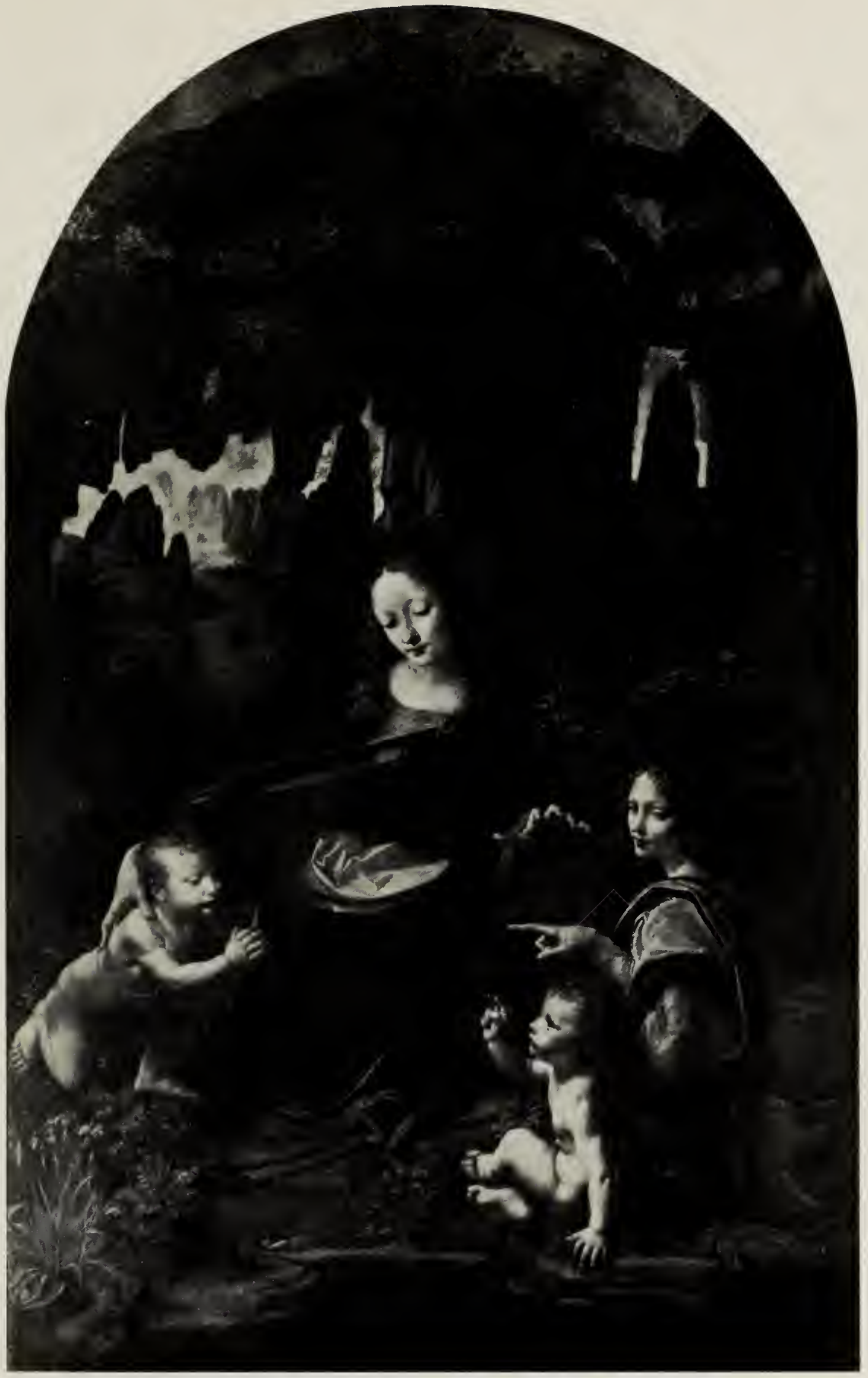
There were votive Madonnas of this sort: for mercies accorded, for deliverance from pestilence, against fire or flood. And great families, especially, had their own particular votive Madonnas. The Bentivoglio or the Sforza, or in German the Meyer family, commanded a painting of the Madonna in memory of some deliverance or to ward off some misfortune. Rene, Duke of Anjou, condescended to worship a Madonna; and the great families of Venice, like the Pesaro, either had a picture of the Madonna in their home chapel or presented it as a votive offering to some great church.



MADONNA OF THE HOUSE OF ALBA

RAPHAEL

THE HERMITAGE, ST. PETERSBURG



VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS
LEONARDO DA VINCI
LOUVRE, PARIS

There was the Mater Amabilis, the Loving Mother, the most modern of presentments of the Madonna. It is in this sense that almost all modern Madonnas are painted, outside of those commanded by the Church, for the modern artist is most often an individualist. In France or in Germany he is often enough an atheist or at heart a *libre-penseur*. The legend of the Madonna appeals to him, but almost always by its human side. He strives to render the divinity of mother-love, and it is here that his picture differs from the old ones, which professed to render the human though immaculate Mother of Christ.

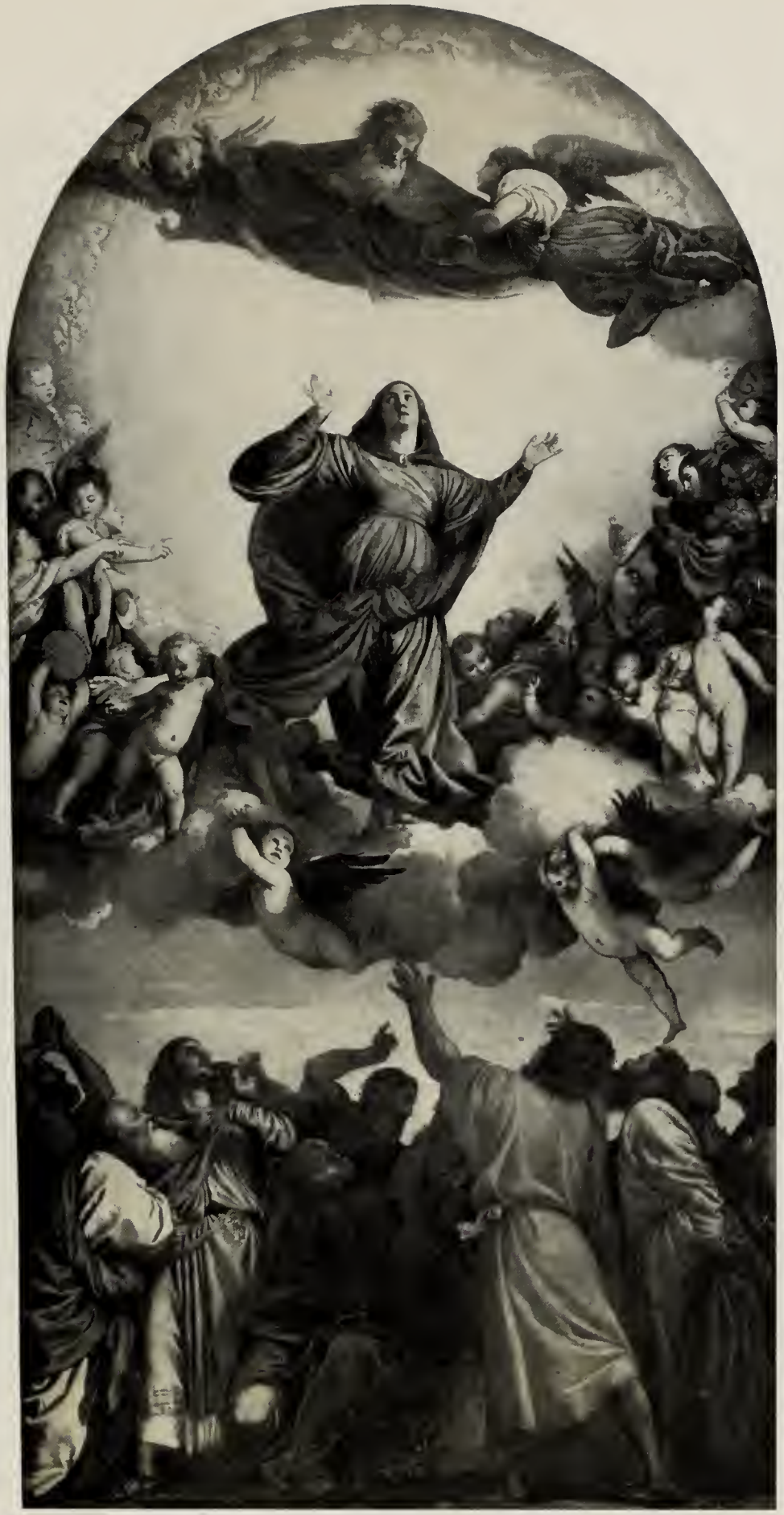
There was, again, the Madre Pia, the Virgin adoring her Son; and these varied from the severely stiff adoration of the early Sienese school to one of Correggio's which I have spoken of in another place, where the Mother adores humanly, with a tender playfulness which just stops short of a caress.

The Venetians, who were painters first and religious afterward, invented the Pastoral Madonna, where Mary and her Child, perhaps with the young St. John and St. Anna, disposed themselves in beautiful woodland landscape surroundings. The great Venetian nobles loved the country. Most of them had country houses and made each summer there *villegiatura*. And they liked to surround themselves with pictures of country

life—sometimes profane, again sacred, and yet of a playfulness and lightness of touch quite different from the grim old mosaics of Ravenna.

Again, there were many historical subjects relating to the life of the Virgin, and some of these subjects have been treated with great beauty. For instance, there was the 'Presentation of the Virgin,' which has been magnificently treated by both Titian and Tintoretto, not to speak of Carpaccio. There was the 'Girlhood of the Virgin,' which was the subject of one of the earliest and best of Rossetti's paintings. There was the 'Marriage of the Virgin,' of which well-known examples by Perugino and Raphael exist; and, most of all, there was the 'Annunciation,' one of the most beautiful of mystical subjects, which has been painted countless times. The Italians treated it in a formal way, the main lines of the composition seldom varying till the climax of the Renaissance was reached and passed. Yet in this restricted form they made some wonderfully fine things. Rossetti has treated it in a quite modern yet beautiful and pathetic way.

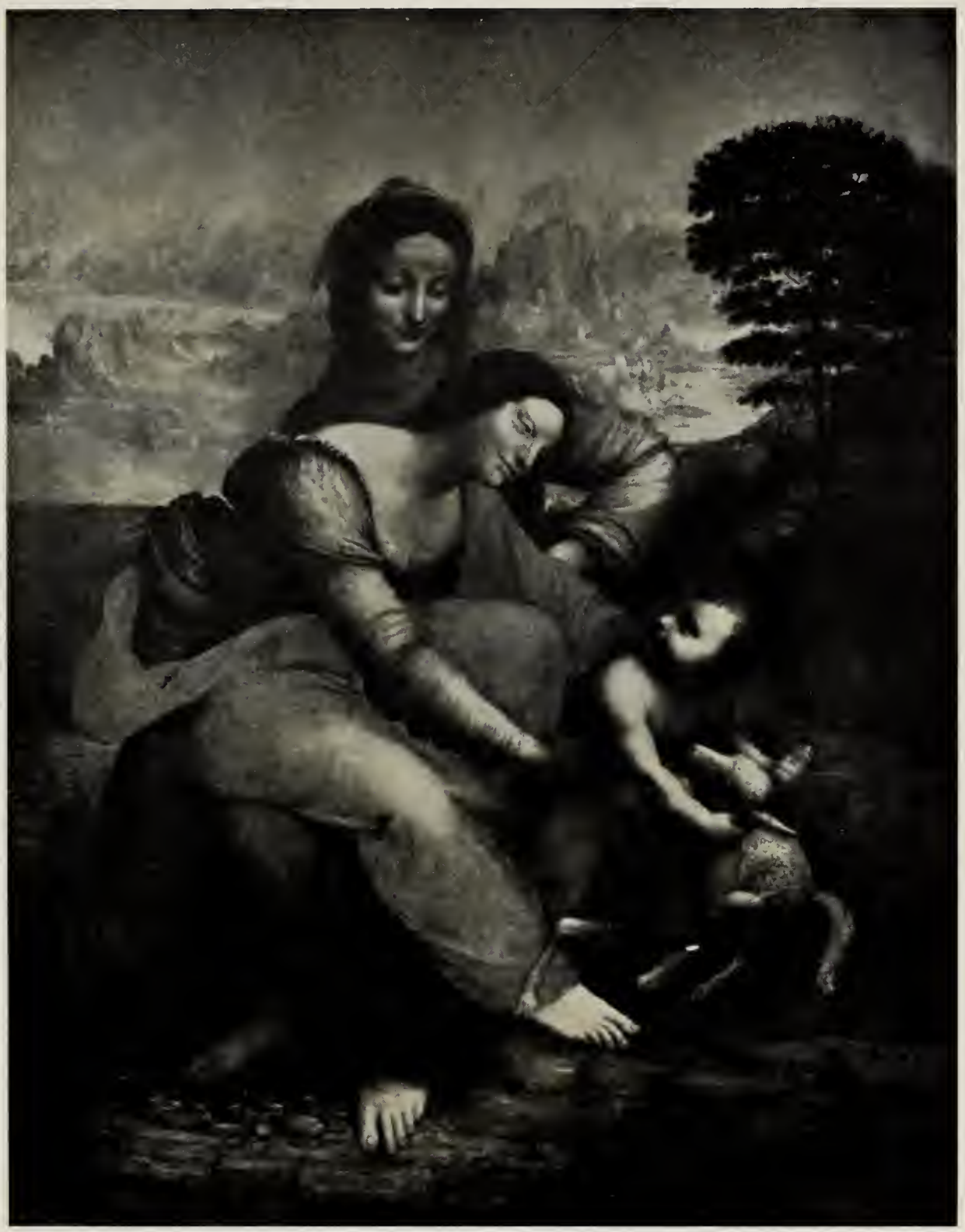
The 'Visitation,' again, was a subject which lent itself to beautiful treatment. And when we come to the 'Nativity' and to the quickly following scenes of the 'Adoration of the Shepherds' and the 'Adoration of Magi' the name of the pictures painted is legion. It



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

TITIAN

THE ACADEMY, VENICE



ST. ANNE, THE VIRGIN, AND THE CHRIST-CHILD

LEONARDO DA VINCI

LOUVRE, PARIS

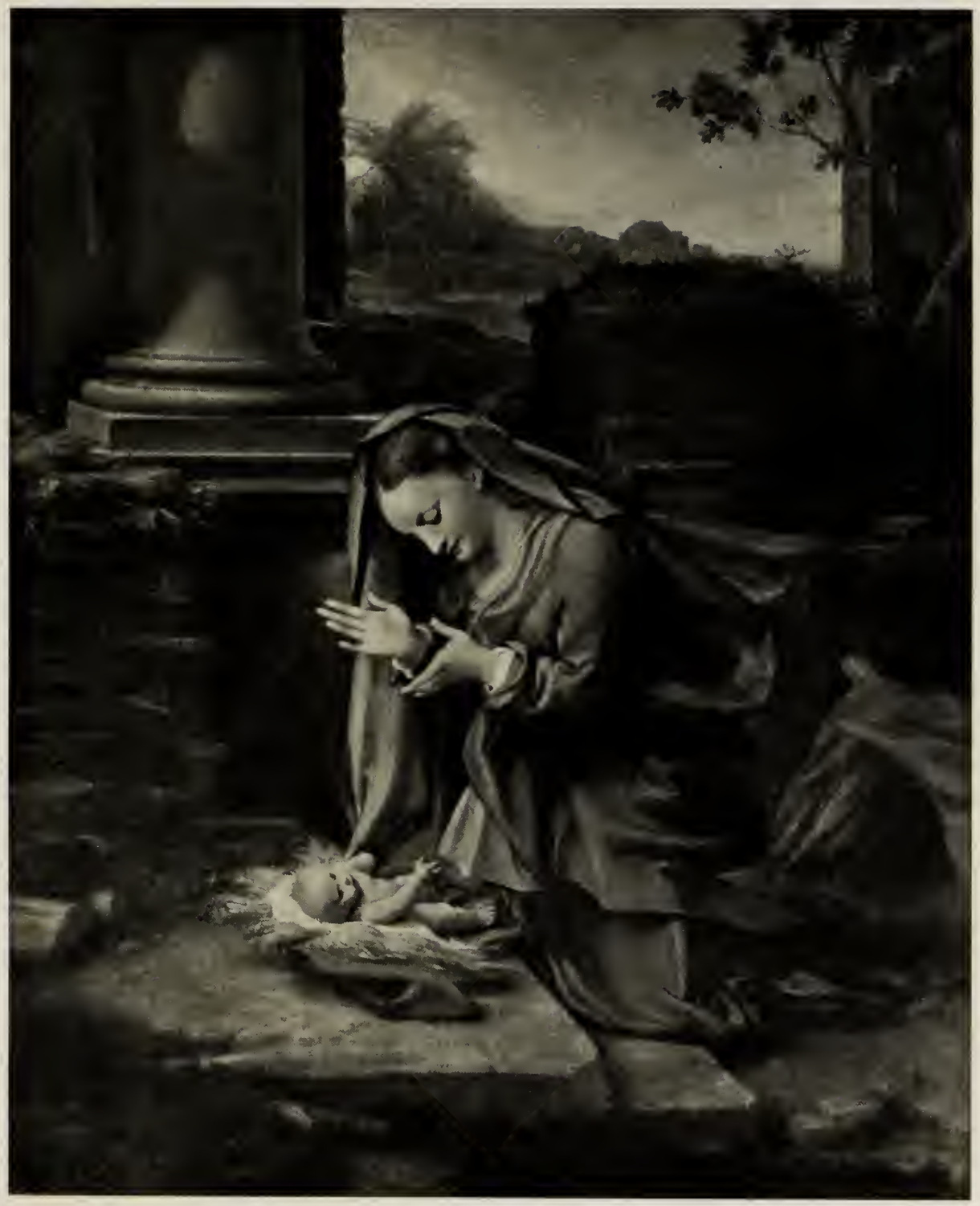
seems impossible to conceive of finer subjects, at least from a literary standpoint. They were representations of the Madonna from the human side, and every mother who had known childbirth, every father who had heard his child's first cry, knew and understood these things. So many fine pictures have been painted of the 'Nativity' that it is hard to choose; but one thinks of Correggio's 'La Notte' and of brilliant imitations by El Greco, Ribera, and Murillo.

The 'Flight into Egypt' gave splendid subjects, and of this motif one of the most beautiful presentments is a modern one by Merson, where the tired Virgin and Child lie in the arms of the silent, ironic Sphinx, and a thin rivulet of blue smoke flows waveringly upward from the little fire where the meek donkey and meeker Joseph repose. The subject of the 'Holy Family' was treated in all sorts of ways. The simplest form was, of course, just the Mother and Child in their human relation of the Mother suckling her Child or watching over him, happy and yet well-nigh heart-broken — as how many millions of mothers have done — while the little man-child sleeps. There were all sorts of variants on scenes of homely domestic life — the Mother and Child play with an apple or a bird or a rose, or the Child gives the rose to his Mother, or she catches him to her and

kisses him. As art developed—the hypercritical say, as art declined—the tendency was constantly to treat the subject on its human side, and whatever it lost in grandeur it gained in pathos. Correggio was one of the first to treat the theme in this way, and he was one of the best.

Other subjects—the 'Crucifixion,' the 'Descent from the Cross,' the 'Deposition,' the 'Entombment,' count among other figures that of Mary. Some splendid things have been done with these subjects. Mantegna's group of the 'Sorrowing Women,' among whom is Mary, is one of the noblest, as it is one of the ugliest, things in art.

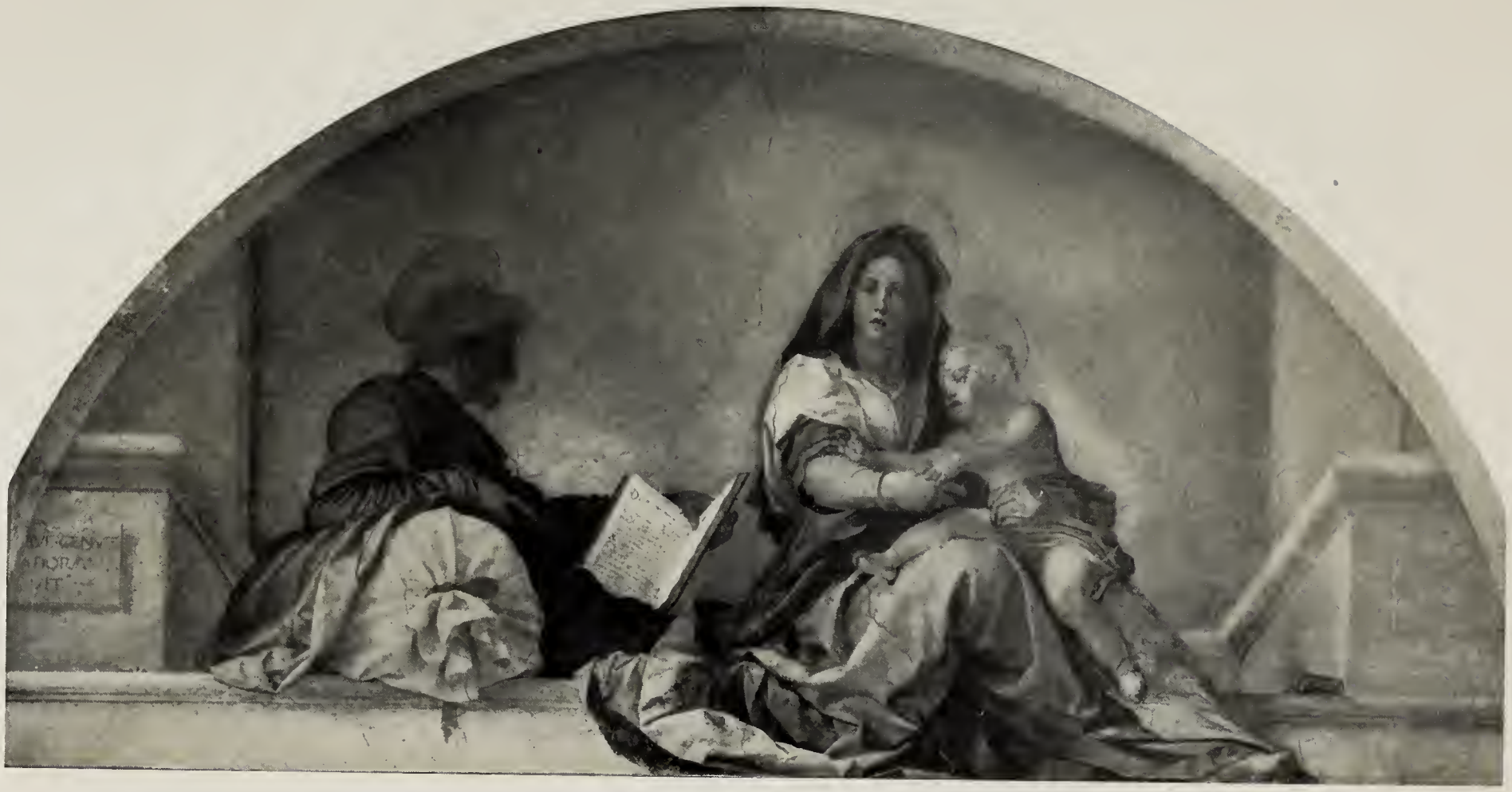
Some very great painters are celebrated for their Madonnas. Others, equally great, either have not painted them at all, or have made very few. Raphael, Titian, and Murillo one thinks of at once as famous painters who have often painted the Mother and Child. Other men, like Terborch, Vermeer, and Chardin, partly on account of their *genre*, never attempted to paint the Madonna. Although one does not think of Velasquez as a painter of this sort of thing, he did do at least one, his 'Assumption of the Virgin.' While this is not generally considered one of his successes, it contains some very fine passages of painting; indeed, it may be called



THE VIRGIN ADORING THE CHRIST-CHILD

CORREGGIO

UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE



MADONNA OF THE SACK

DEL SARTO

CHURCH OF THE ANNUNZIATA, FLORENCE

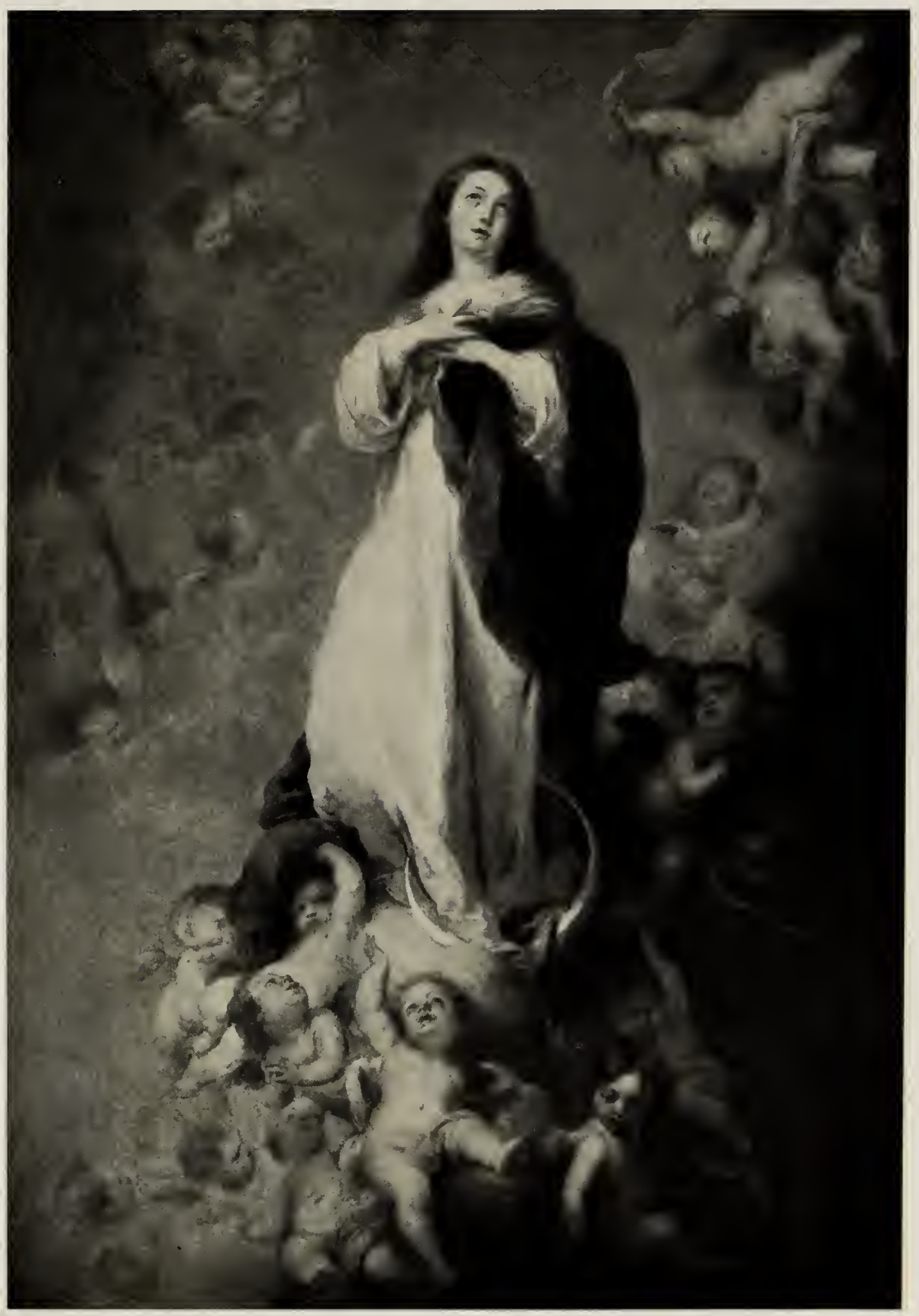
a much underrated picture. It does not, however, represent the Mother and Child, and so, strictly speaking, does not come under our subject.

Among the earliest examples of Madonnas are the mosaics of Ravenna. These are splendidly decorative in some ways, but, of course, they have little or no expression. And we, in these later days, have come to feel that expression is one of the most important qualities in a Madonna. The Ravenna decorations are conceived in the Byzantine spirit, and so, for the matter of that, are the earliest Italian paintings. Even so late as Duccio, or in fact later, the Byzantine influence may be observed persisting. Indeed, even in these modern days, one may see at the shops which sell religious things certain Byzantine Madonnas printed on paper with gold background. Something of this ideal has always persisted. Even now the figure of the Madonna is often posed in a more or less conventional manner. There are, of course, many exceptions to this; but the fact remains that nowadays a Madonna posed in very much the same position as the ordinary Byzantine type would hardly attract attention as being different or out of the way.

It is a noticeable thing about the Madonnas of the old masters that each man has made his Lady of Seven Sorrows as if she were his country woman. Raphael's

Madonnas are unmistakably Italian. In some the character of the Italian peasant shows. Dürer's are as palpably German. There is something pathetic about their blonde, naïve *gemutlich* character, so different, one would guess, from the dark Eastern virgin who was the Mother of Christ. Murillo's Madonnas, which in many ways are the most popular, are just as Spanish as these others are Italian or German.

And, in a certain sense, these masters were right; for these pictures were painted for churches or cathedrals where great throngs of simple-minded peasants came who knew nothing of geography or of archæology, but who knew very well what a mother's love meant, and who worshipped it in the counterfeit presentment of one of their own fatherland. In the matter of costume, these painters were more strict; for, while they did not, with archæologic exactness, paint the costume the Virgin probably wore, neither did they paint her dresses in the every-day costume of the period, as they so often did in the case of minor figures in their religious pictures. Rather, they painted her in a sort of a composite costume prescribed by the Church. Usually this was in two parts, a dress and a sort of mantle, the one colored red, the other blue, though in Giorgione's altarpiece at Castelfranco the Madonna is dressed in red and green. This combination of red and blue was very hard to man-



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MURILLO

LOUVRE, PARIS

age except in master hands; the colors were apt to "quarrel" one with the other. Indeed, the Venetians were almost the only ones successful in this particular respect. In the hands of less skilful men the blue was apt to appear of a cold and repellent quality, which was not at all agreeable to the eye.

In composition, something of the same formality was observed. While in some of the later Madonnas, as with Correggio, considerable latitude of composition is allowed, the earlier ones, as those by Cima da Conegliano, Carlo Crivelli, and Bellini, were all constructed on a certain typical plan. The Virgin, holding her Child, was seated on a sort of dais usually having a piece of rich brocade behind. Very often on each side of this drapery appeared a bit of landscape, without regard to whatever light and shade might be on the principal figures. More in the foreground appeared the figures of patron saints, usually to the number of two. Sometimes, as in Carpaccio's famous altarpiece, one or more tiny angels occupied the extreme foreground. This arrangement was peculiar to altarpieces intended for great churches. Where the arrangement was intended for a matter of more intimate purpose, as a chapel or room, the arrangement was much more free.

In studying the Madonna pictures of all times one sees the constant but very slow and gradual evolution

of the mother and child idea. The oldest ones are simply a severe and archaic rendering of her whose honor it was to be the Mother of Christ. The Child was simply a symbol. But in the later days more constantly is expressed the joy of a mother in her helpless child; till in one of Correggio's, charming in its feeling and character, but not, one would guess, very orthodox, the Mother is making one of those divinely ineffective gestures mothers make to their fat, smiling, helpless children.

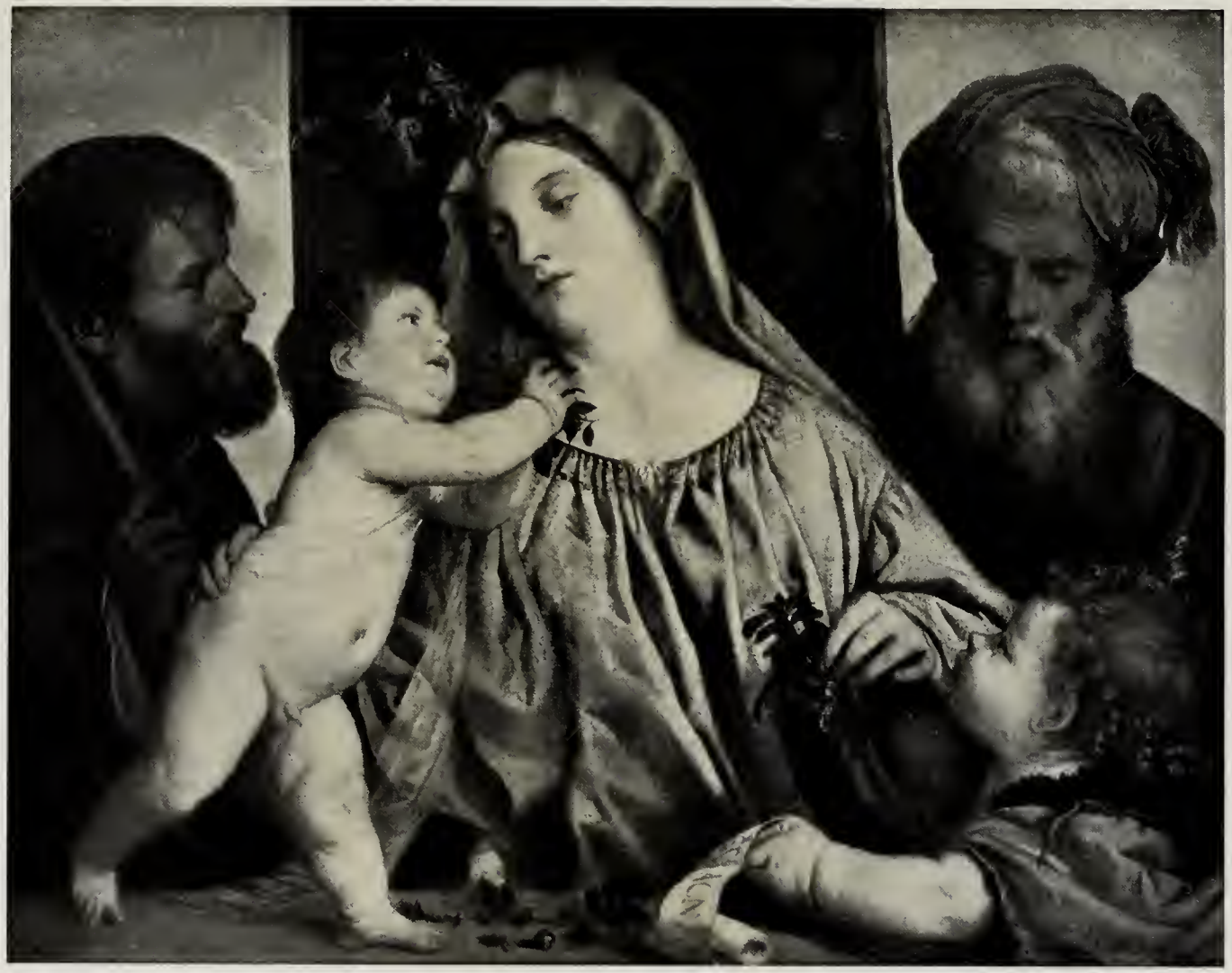
In fact, to most of us nowadays it is the human interest, apart from matters of technique, that appeals in a painting of the Madonna and Child. We see the pictures, as in this book, apart from their surroundings of altar, candles, and incense, and their appeal to us is based on their innate humanity rather than by churchly accompaniment of form and ceremony. We think for the most part more of the Mother than of the Child; whereas in the olden time she was a simple handmaiden of the Lord.

There can be no doubt that the cult of the Madonna has developed respect for women. The rude peasant or warrior who knelt before an altarpiece felt, mingled with his worship, a certain respect for eternal motherhood; and afterwards, when he saw his own wife with his own child, some memory of the beautiful Mother of Christ came over him. Afterwards motherhood and even child-

VIRGIN AND CHILD

CRIVELLI

BRERA GALLERY, MILAN



MADONNA WITH THE CHERRIES

TITIAN

IMPERIAL GALLERY, VIENNA

hood seemed a different matter, a something more beautiful, more mysterious, more pathetic even, than before he had thought it. It is not that hideous cruelties were not committed in the Renaissance or in the middle ages, but the seed of something better was there, so that nowadays the grim cry that seemed so natural to David seems to us inexplicable: "Happy shall he be who dashes their little ones against the stones."

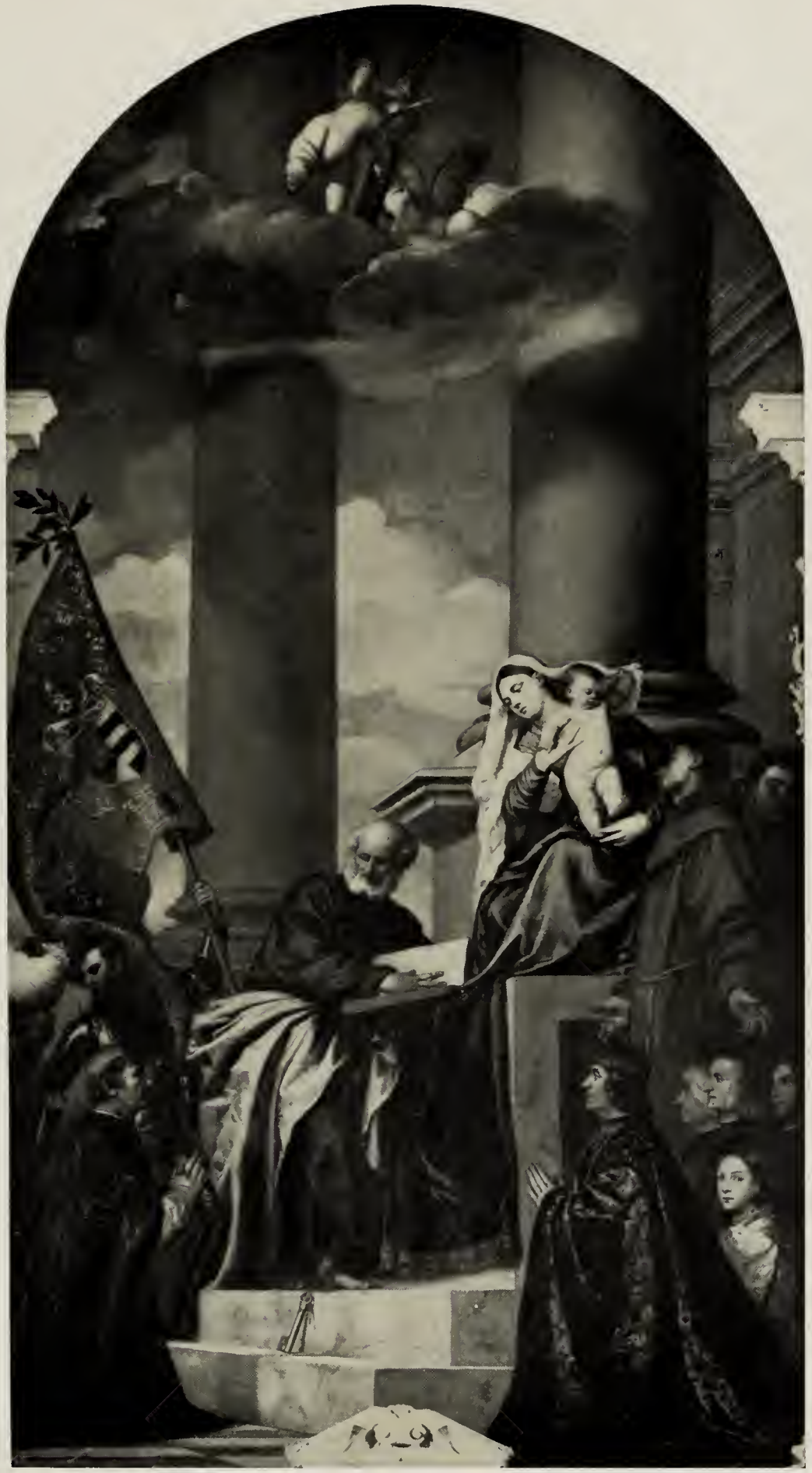
A droll thing about many pictures of the Madonna and Child is that the Child is almost always represented as at least a year old, often two or three. At the same time, we see the Shepherds or the Magi adoring, and we gather that the divine Infant must be only a few days old. Of course one understands the reason of this. A week-old child is not a very impressive sight, while a fine boy of sixteen months often has the noble, serious air of the Child of the Sistine Madonna.

Some of the early Flemish painters, with a charming naïveté, paint the Child very much as He must have looked at the end of ten days. A fine example of this sort is a picture by Gerard (or Gerhardt) David, in which the infant Jesus is represented as a very young child. Yet so intense is the feeling and the observation shown in the picture that one warms toward it.

People of different times and different countries approached the subject of the Madonna in differing spirit.

The old Italian things are done in practically the same manner. The effort is to make a decorative, rather conventionalized, rendering of a Madonna and Child. With the Spaniards it is rather different. The Jesuit movement was already in full sway before the best Spanish painters came to the fore, and their presentment of the subject is more passionate, more picturesque, than the Italians.

Probably the most celebrated Madonna in the world is the famous 'Sistine Madonna,' which is now in Dresden. Reams have been written about this, and it is indeed a picture made with much skill and discretion. Just why it should be considered better than, let us say, some of Raphael's other Madonnas is hard to understand. It may be that, having strayed to Dresden, it became better known to German art critics, and these latter gentlemen are notoriously sympathetic. It may be that one has seen Raphael's more famous Madonnas so often that one does not respond to them with the same enthusiasm that one shows for a less well known thing. For instance, the 'Madonna of the Chair' is an admirable composition of able workmanship; and yet, so often has one seen it in gaudy chromo-lithograph, or in feeble pastel copies, that it is hard to give it the attention and admiration which it really deserves. One wonders why his 'Madonna of the House of Alba' is not



MADONNA OF THE PESARO FAMILY

TITIAN

CHURCH OF THE FRARI, VENICE

as well known as the ones already mentioned. The head of this Madonna is charming, of a subtlety of type superior to those of his already mentioned, and the design and workmanship are truly remarkable.

'La Belle Jardinière' is a very famous example of Raphael, but not, one would say, so beautiful as some of his other Madonnas. It is more in the pastoral style, which may to some extent account for its great popularity.

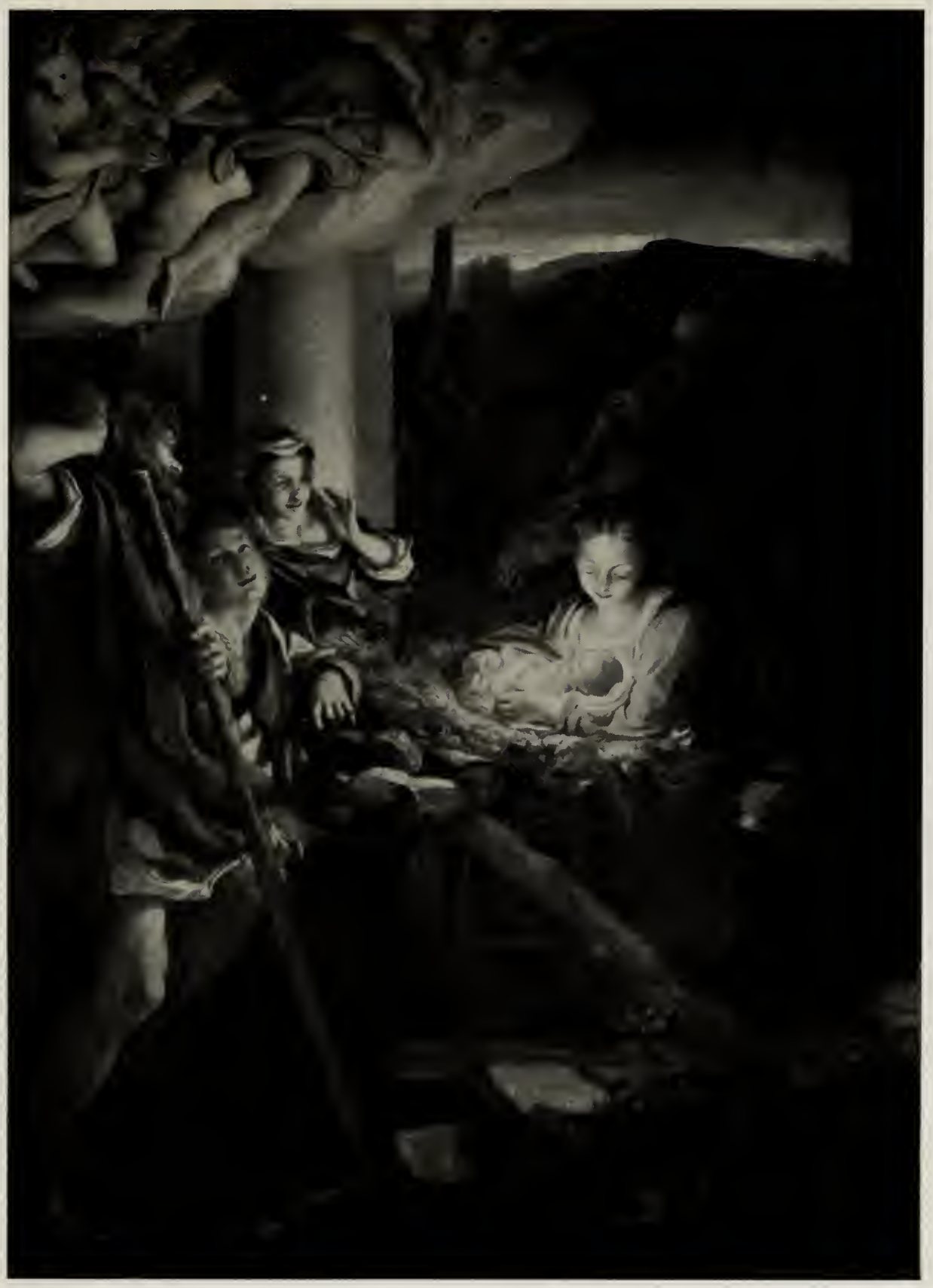
Next to Raphael, the man with whom one most associates the Madonna idea is Murillo. Like Raphael, his name has suffered something of an eclipse in these later days, but he still remains one of the most popular of painters. And while one sometimes feels his coloring to be too sweet, his chiaroscuro too soft and tender, the fact remains that he was a very able man and understood perfectly well how to produce the effect desired by the good fathers who ordered his pictures. Some of his Madonna pictures have achieved great reputations and commanded enormous prices. Not a little of their popularity comes from the Spanish type of his Madonna's face—passionate, sensuous, yet full of the deepest devotion. Saint Theresa may have looked thus.

Bellini is another of the painters whom one thinks of particularly when the subject of Madonnas is mentioned. Perhaps something of his interest comes from

this: that he was just between the new and the old. He had studied with Mantegna; he had all the old traditions at his finger-tips; yet he was the master of Giorgione, and to some extent, as far as an old man can, modified his work from study of his pupil. Bellini's pictures have all the gravity, the poise, of the elder work, and yet they are better done—not too well done for those who like naïveté, yet well enough for those who dislike foolishly futile work. People see, too, in his work, or think they see, a certain expression that delights them.

Mantegna's Madonnas have a certain nobility about them that is very fine, a commingling of Greek and Gothic traits—or rather a juxtaposition, for somehow the two qualities do not mix. One is constantly aware of his long study from Greek, or at least from classic, remains, and at the same time one is always conscious of the wholly Gothic spirit that underlies all his work.

Correggio, perhaps most of all men, understood how to express tender human mother-love suitable to the style of Madonna picture called the 'Mater Amabilis.' To begin with, this kind of picture just suited his soft, suggestive style, based on a thorough understanding of chiaroscuro. Then again, his invention was of the light and tender sort that easily lent itself to just this kind of subject. Dozens of successful pictures have been based on his famous 'Notte,' and his adoring Virgin in Flor-



THE NATIVITY ("THE NIGHT")

CORREGGIO

ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN

ence is one of the loveliest and most human of the Madonnas.

Although many of Dürer's Madonnas are done in this free style, they are naturally quite different. He quite misses the tender, almost ironic gaiety of Correggio; but in revenge, his pictures have a simple German honesty which often makes them interesting. His Madonnas are not beautiful or impressive, yet there is a sort of charm about these simple little Dutch Mädchen whom he so naïvely elevated to the intolerable glory of Motherhood of Christ.

The so-called 'Meyer Madonna,' by Hans Holbein, gave rise to an interesting discussion some years ago. There were two pictures almost exactly the same, one in Dresden and one in Darmstadt. It seemed impossible to decide which was the original or which the replica or copy. At last the two pictures were hung side by side in Dresden, and competent judges decided that the Darmstadt picture was the original.

The picture is arranged after the quaint fashion of olden times; that is, the donor, good old Meyer, with his entire family are represented as kneeling in the foreground of the picture. The portraits of these good people are among the finest things in the picture.

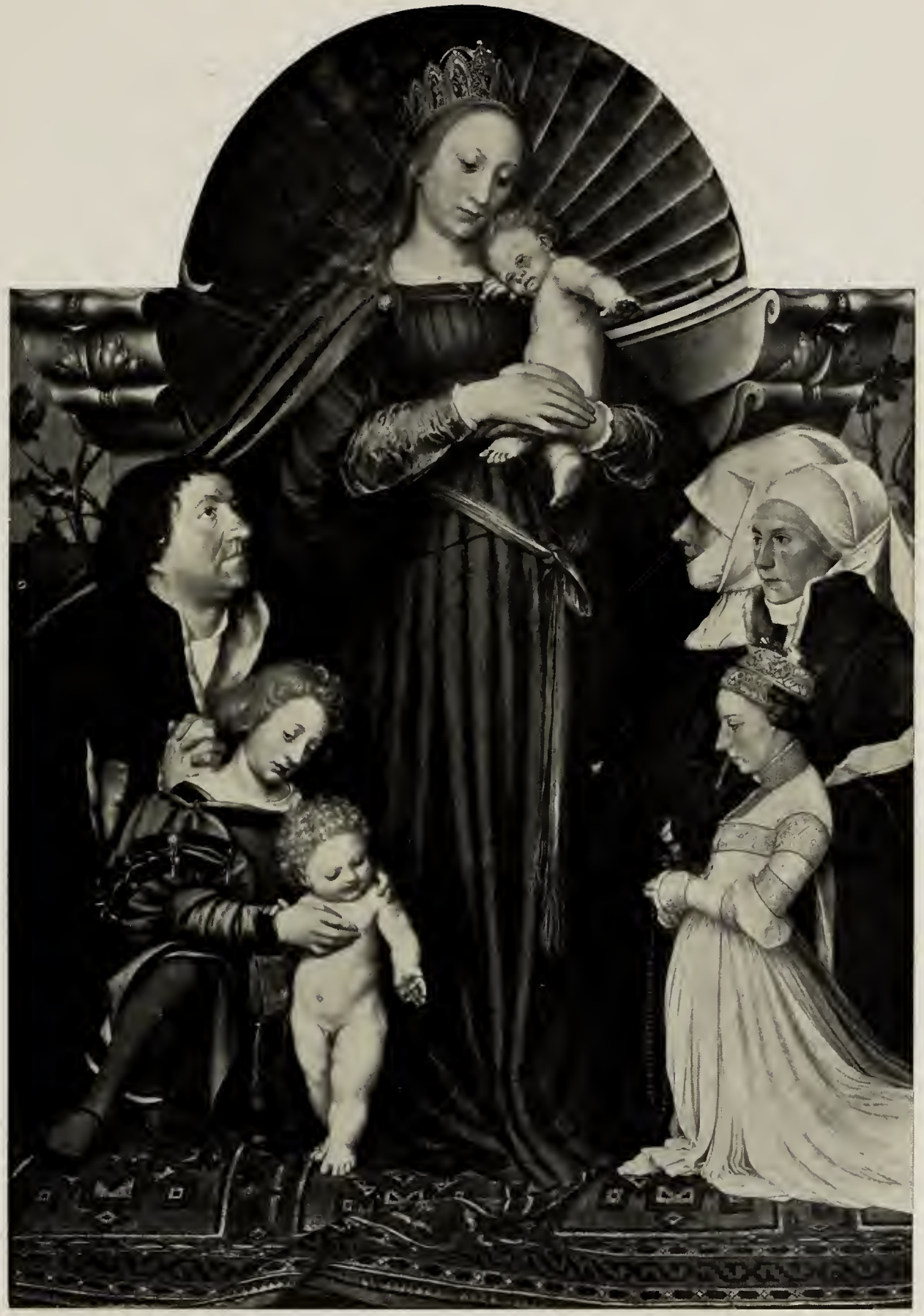
The Venetians, with their love of color and their frankly sensuous attitude toward art, very soon broke

away from the grim, stiff poses affected by Bellini. So late as the day of Giorgione's earliest picture, the Castelfranco Madonna, they kept to something of the formal composition; but already the colors were becoming so glowing, the chiaroscuro so alluring, that the picture was become a feast to the eye first of all. And later, in some of Titian's pictures, this research of beauty for its own sake was pushed to the exclusion of everything else. The Venetians would have agreed with the good old hymnist who said:

"Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less."

One of the loveliest of these sumptuous country scenes is Titian's 'Vierge au Lapin;' but Titian was quite capable of mastering a grander style, and his 'Assumption' is one of the great pictures of the world. Again, his 'Madonna of the Pesaro Family ' is filled with a noble and a tranquil gravity. One does not think of Titian as essentially devout, but he could paint a magnificent Madonna all the same.

One of the pictures reproduced in these pages is the so-called 'Madonna of Castelfranco,' and many people esteem this the most beautiful of Madonnas. It is among the few undoubted Giorgiones. How can it be doubted, since there it has stood in Castelfranco since he painted it these many years ago? The picture was



THE MEYER MADONNA

HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

GRAND-DUCAL PALACE, DARMSTADT

made just before Giorgione came into his fullest, richest manner; so that there is a certain naïveté in the design of the figures, something almost Gothic in the rendering of some of the draperies, which stamps it as something different from his latest work.

Tradition tells us—who can say how truly—that the armed figure at the left is a likeness of young Matteo Costanzo, in whose memory the picture was painted, although the figure is called St. Liberalis. Tradition, too, the idle gossip, says that the model for the figure of the Virgin was the woman whom the painter loved, although there is no particular ground for this belief beyond some idle rhymes, written in red chalk on the back, which Giorgione might have written. Beautiful as are the central figures, one should not ignore the charming landscapes on each side of the dais. The Venetians, so to say, invented modern landscape. Giorgione was, perhaps, among the first of them beautifully to render it; so that these two little scenes might be called among the earliest of modern landscape.

The picture is conceived wholly in the elder fashion. There is no attempt made to make an original composition. The general arrangement of the figures is much as Bellini or as Cima might have placed them; and yet so subtle a thing is originality that it informs the whole picture and makes it one of the earliest of modern art,

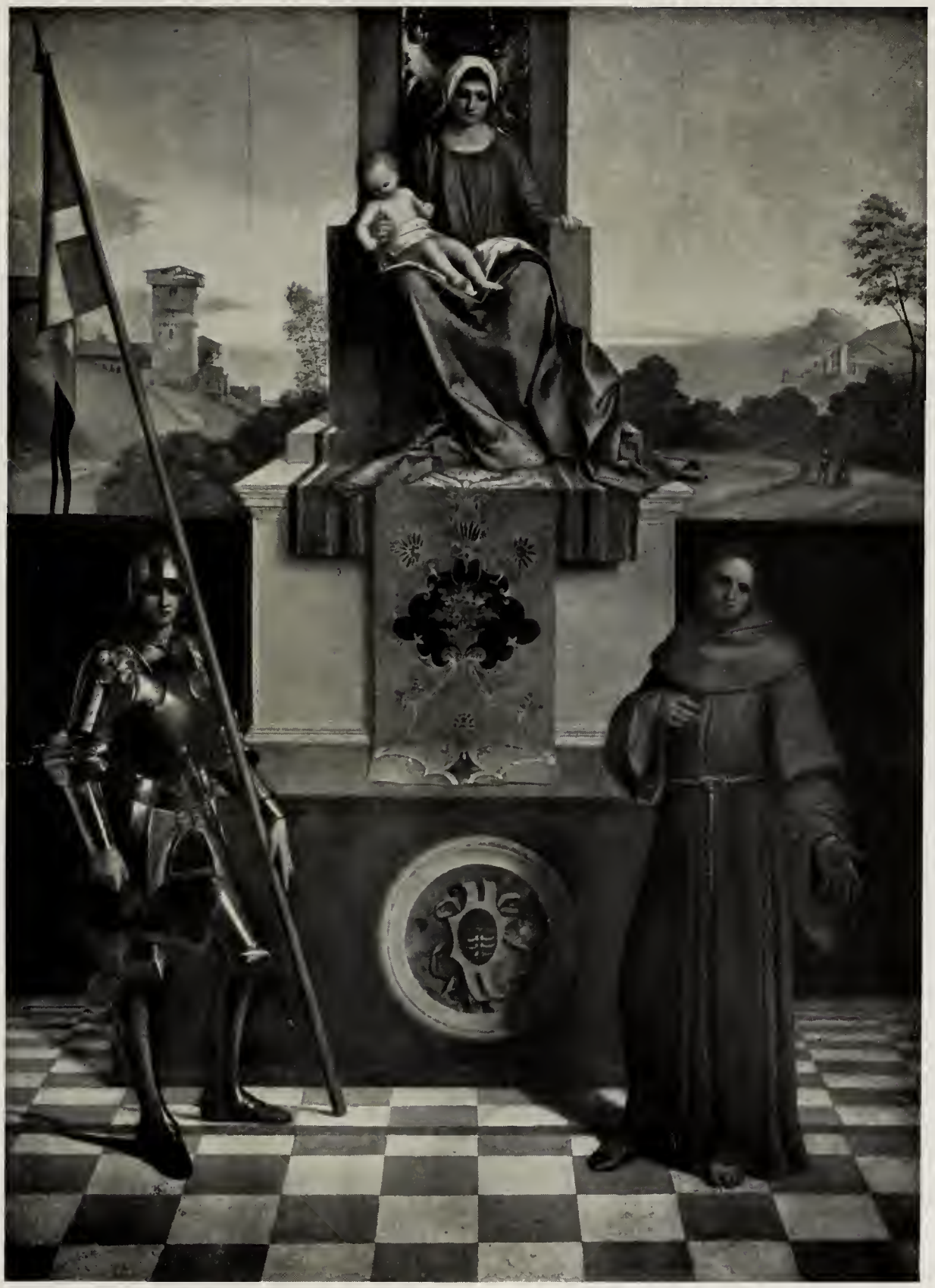
as it marks the ending of an older order. All the later Italian masterpieces, even those by Titian, Tintoretto, and by Veronese, hark back, as it were, to the work of Giorgione. One realizes that in a certain sense their work would never have been done without him.

Da Vinci did not paint many Madonnas, as, indeed, he painted very few pictures of any sort. But the few he did paint are of singular loveliness. 'La Vierge aux Rochers' is one of the most famous of his; and about this something the same controversy has raged as did about the two Meyer Madonnas of Holbein. That is, there are two of these Virgins of the Rocks, one in Paris, one in London, and there is great discussion as to which is the genuine one, though opinion seems to lean toward the French one.

Botticelli's Madonnas are of a special type. Pater has written beautifully concerning them. He imagined the Madonna as not wholly happy in her Child, longing, perhaps, for one more human and less perfect.

"Her trouble is in the very caress of the mysterious Child, whose gaze is always far from her, and who has already that sweet look of devotion which men have never been able altogether to love, and which makes the born saint an object almost of suspicion to his earthly brethren."

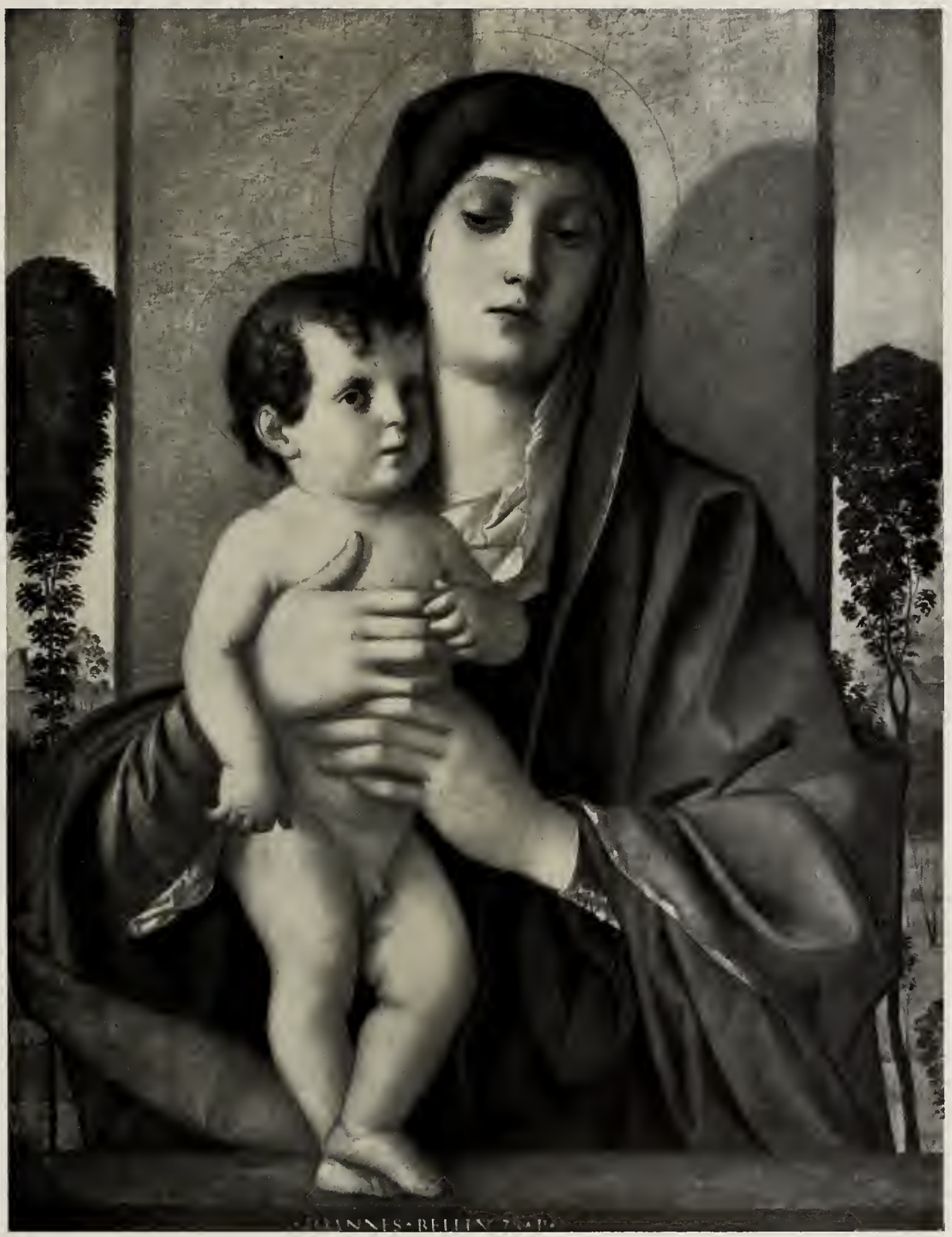
Pater is always rather fanciful. This mysterious



THE MADONNA OF CASTELFRANCO

GIORGIONE

CASTELFRANCO CATHEDRAL



THE MADONNA OF THE TWO TREES

BELLINI

ACADEMY, VENICE

trouble in the Madonna's face might mean half a hundred things, or nothing. Probably Botticelli thought that the Mother of Christ should look grave rather than cheerful in wondering what the future is to be.

Luini in some measure inherited the skill of Da Vinci, and his Madonnas suggest something of the ineffable sweetness and tenderness which Leonardo knew so well to indicate in his lovely Virgins. Luini's type, however, though at first it seems exactly like Da Vinci's, proves on study to differ in some respects. He made the nose longer and, therefore, the chin shorter than one finds in the work of Leonardo. In some of his, as, for instance, the 'St. Catherine' of the Hermitage Gallery, the mouth is curiously wide. He has something of Da Vinci's delicate modeling, although it is a modeling by no means so subtle as his master's.

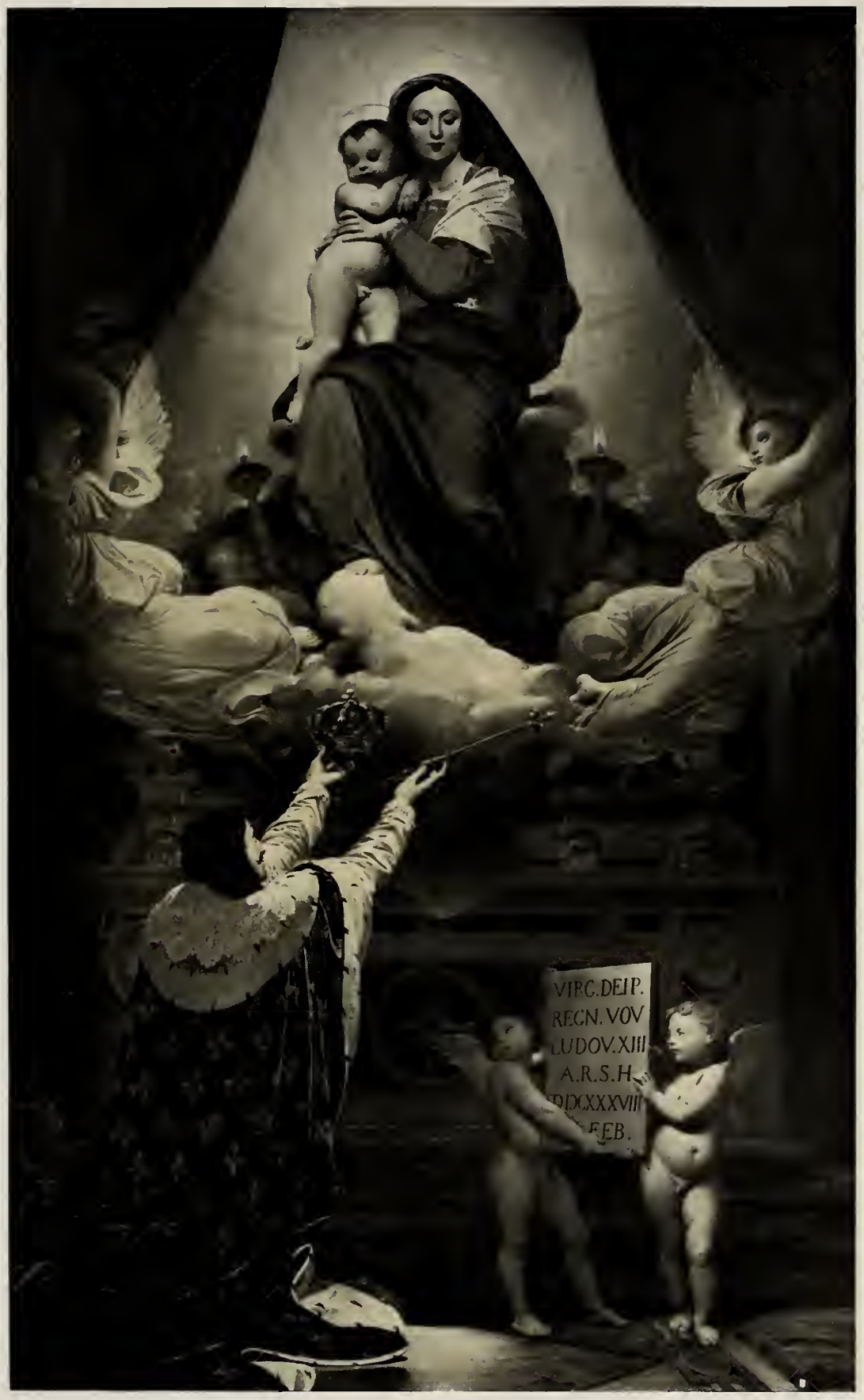
Guido Reni made Madonnas as he made everything else—with skill, but without too much feeling. He had a particular trick of painting upturned eyes. "Any head sufficed him for a model. Being once besought by Count Aldovrandi to confide in him who the lady was of whom he availed himself in drawing his beautiful Madonnas and Magdalens, he made his color-grinder, a fellow of scoundrelly visage, sit down, and, commanding him to look upward, drew him such a marvelous head of a saint that it seemed as if it had been done by magic. Better

than any artist, he understood how to portray upturned faces, and boasted that he knew a hundred ways of making heads with their eyes lifted to heaven." It is not in this manner one would guess that great pictures are made.

There are some men whose individuality is so intense as to really injure rather than help their career, and one might say that Crivelli was one of these. His work, though well drawn for his day, and pleasant in color, somehow missed the recognition it really deserved on account of the excessive originality of his treatment. Of late, men have come to realize more thoroughly the remarkable qualities of invention and of design in his works.

One does not think of Michael Angelo particularly as a maker of Madonnas, and yet some of the noblest examples have been made by him. His Pietà with the dead Christ lying across the Mother's knees is one of the noblest and most pathetic things that have been done in sculpture. Here, as in all his work, the point of view, as well as the workmanship, is quite different from any one else. Another of his Madonnas is that of the 'Mother and Child.' Here the infant Jesus is of tremendous Michael Angelesque proportions, and yet, notwithstanding, there is a lovely feeling about the group.

Filippo Lippi was quite capable of flirting with the



THE VOW OF LOUIS XIII

INGRES

CATHEDRAL, MONTAUBAN

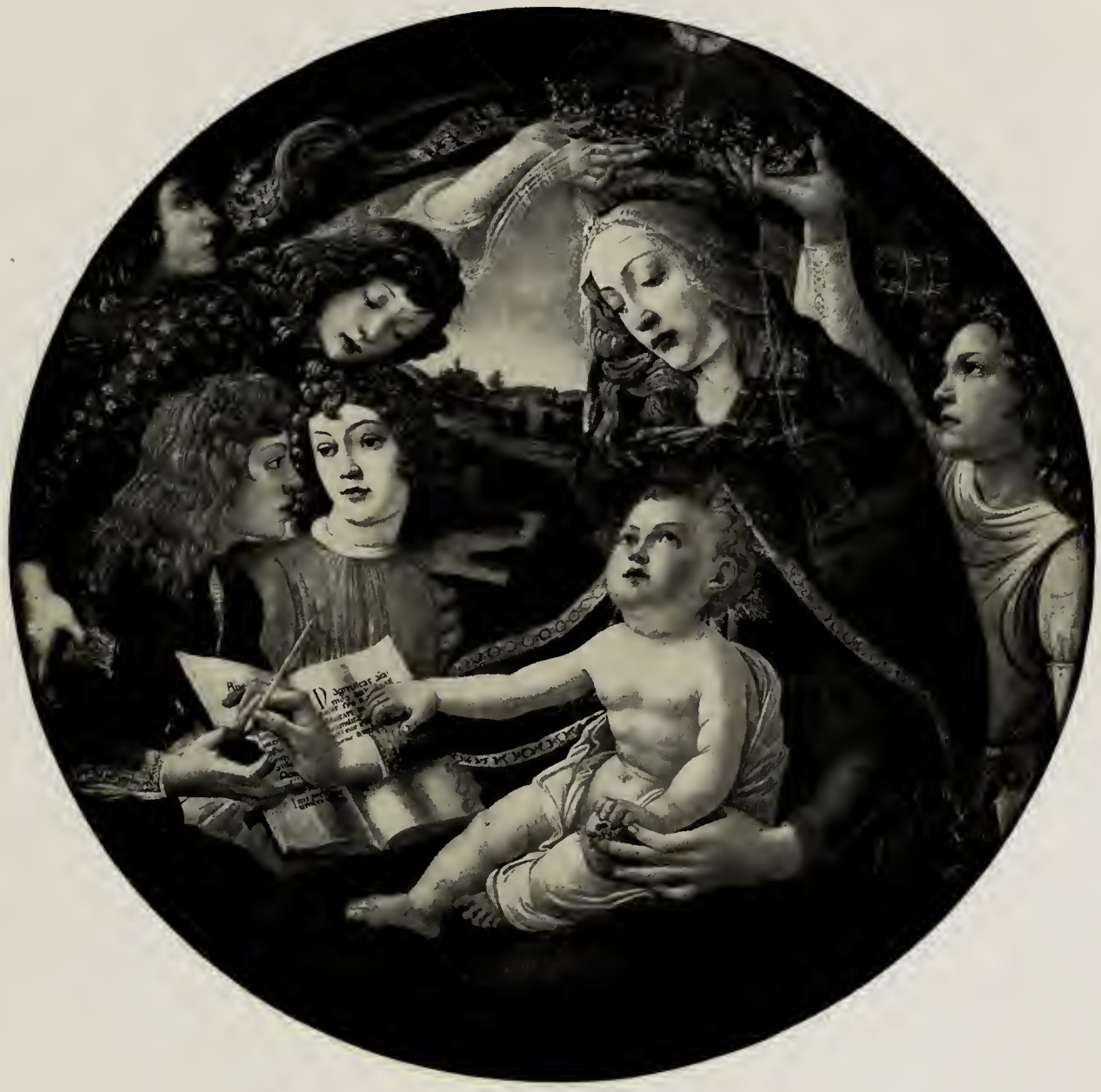
pretty model of whatever Madonna he happened to be painting. One fears he did n't approach the matter in a very serious spirit. And yet, because of this, there is a certain roguish charm to his Madonnas which is undeniable. There is none of Botticelli's sadness in these votive offerings of his. Everybody seems to be having a good time. The cunning little Virgin is trying to look serious, but the accompanying little angels are quite frankly laughing. He was constantly painting Madonnas, and liked to paint them in the attitude of adoration. Here they hardly looked so roguish, yet even here they are frail little women unlike the Mother of Christ.

Ingres, of modern men, was particularly devoted to the Madonna, and one of his pictures is the 'Vow of Louis XIII.' It is quite evident from the first glance that the main idea of this picture is taken from Raphael's 'Sistine Madonna.' Indeed, Ingres's enemies gloated over this fact, and called his picture a mere "pastiche." But Ingres was perfectly simple-minded about the matter. He honestly believed that Raphael's arrangements were the best that could be made, and thought that it was a duty to imitate them. Of course, the introduction of the figure of King Louis makes of it a considerably different composition, and Ingres's style, which *au fond* was very *naif* and realistic, was in essentials, in spite of his efforts and admirations, quite

different from the sophisticated and eclectic style of Raphael.

The work of Ingres is a curious paradox. He tried desperately hard to make his pictures cold, classical, and clear; yet through it all constantly break the genuine naïveté, realism, and passion of the man. Ingres could paint a charming woman's face, as 'La Source' and various of his portraits testify; yet he seems to have felt it a sort of duty here to make his Madonna as slick and smug as possible. The things which one admires about this are the handsome design and skilful modeling; in particular, the beautiful design of the Virgin's drapery. This picture, though certainly not among the finest of the master, was the one which made, or at least affirmed, his reputation.

One of the most pathetic of Madonnas from a dramatic standpoint is Bouguereau's 'Madonna de Consolation.' The Madonna is enthroned in an almost Byzantine attitude of compassion, while a desolate mother, her own little child dead by her side, lies heartbroken across the Virgin's knees. The face of the Madonna is without doubt one of the finest things that Bouguereau ever made. The picture was painted just after the Franco-Prussian war, and to a nation whose mothers had lost so many of their first born it meant a great



CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

BOTTICELLI

UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

deal. Even the coldness of the painting is not out of place in such a picture of chill despair.

Some painters enamoured of realism have tried to portray certain scenes in the life of the Virgin exactly as they conceive they must have occurred and as they must have appeared. For instance, Holman Hunt has painted the 'Discussion in the Temple,' or, rather, 'Christ's Parents finding Him in the Temple,' and has made it as much as possible as he conceives it must have appeared. He even goes to a length which none of the old masters even attempted; that is, he makes all the actors in the little scene of pronounced Semitic type. The old masters almost always were content to give the human and the churchly significance of the scene, but seldom troubled themselves about excessive realism of detail. But Hunt tried to make everything, even racial characteristics, as truthfully as he could. However, he treated the matter in a reverent spirit and his Jewish types were the noblest that he could find.

Quite different from this in intention are the pictures of the same subject by Menzel and by Liebermann. Both of these men have also rendered the actors in the scene as of a Jewish type; only in Menzel's picture they appear to be savagely caricatured, while in Liebermann's the insistence on racial type is no less cruel, although the picture is made by a Jew rather than by a

Gentile, as was the other one. It has generally been felt that these pictures, while more realistic in the exact sense, really fail more than did the early pictures to give us a true rendering of the scene; for, so used have we Westerners grown to the Western ideal of Christ and the Virgin, that characters painted as these most likely looked give us something of a shock. We cannot see the truth and human nature of the picture because of the stir it has given to certain of our feelings. So that to many of us the elder type of picture, with all its inaccuracies of setting and costume, conveys the truest idea in so far as its appeal is made to our humanity and our feeling.

Certain other moderns have gone to the other extreme of imitating the naïveté of the old masters in rendering the *mise en scène* and costume of their subject under the appearance and conditions of their day. For instance, Von Uhde has painted the Virgin just before the Nativity as a sick and tired German woman helped on by a humble Dutchman of a St. Joseph to the little inn where rest may perhaps be had; and only from the *naif* halos about the heads does one guess that these are sacred characters and not merely simple peasants.

Jean Beraud has gone so far as to represent a crucifixion in the *mise en scène* of Montmartre. This is

MADONNA AND CHILD WITH TWO ANGELS

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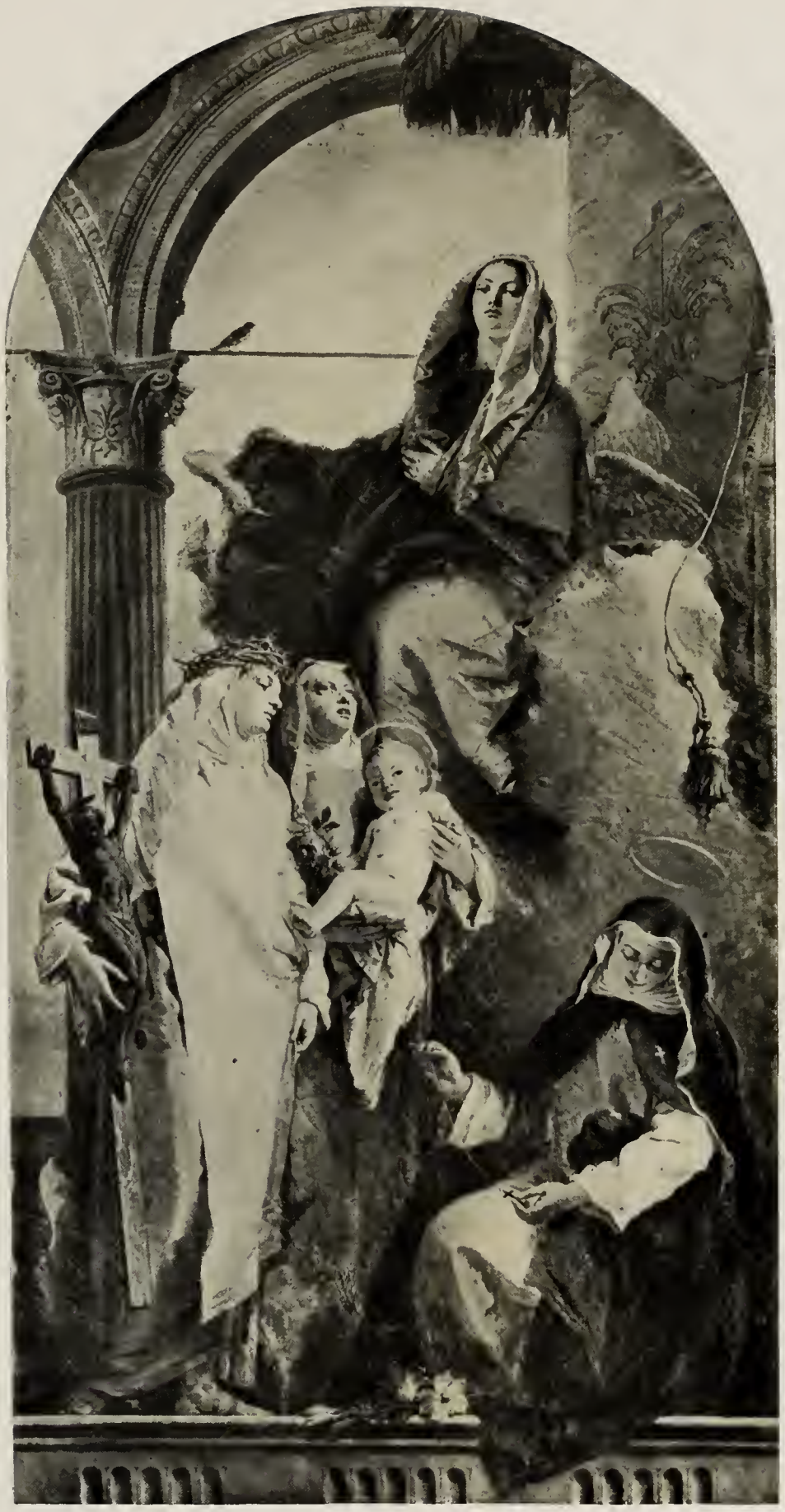
UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE



THE MADONNA AND THREE DOMINICAN SAINTS

TIEPOLO

CHURCH OF THE GESUATI, VENICE

not strictly a Madonna subject, though she appears in the group of mourning women, but it serves to show the extent to which this manifestation of *modernité* can go. What leads one to distrust this tendency is that it has not the simple faith and naïveté which charmed us in the older men. On the contrary, it is sometimes the last word of sophistication and, in Beraud's case, of perversity. With the older men one loves the simplicity which felt the humanity of the old story so strongly as to forget to make right the details. With the new men one is a trifle wearied with the incessant strain for novelty which ends by imitating an old fault, because for the moment it is newer than a modern truth.

For we have come to think of Madonnas as living in a time apart from, surely not of, our own time or the time of Herod or even the Italian Renaissance; and living, too, in a different land, something we have never seen, at the back of the North Wind, as it were. But there, the same as here, just a few of the eternal things are acted; Birth, Motherhood, Death. Her life after all expresses those things to us, as rendered in art, in the simplest, the gravest, and the most pathetic way.

One of the pretty stories of art is how Cimabue's great Madonna was carried through the streets of Flor-

ence. "And thus it happened that this work was the object of so much admiration for the people of that day, they having then never seen anything better, that it was carried in solemn procession, with the sound of trumpet and other festal demonstrations, from the house of Cimabue to the church, he himself being highly rewarded and honored for it."

THE MADONNA *By Philip L. Hale*